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MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY SLAVIC INSTITUTE PAPERS

NO. 15

SOME PROBLEMS OF
BALTIC-SLAVIC RELATIONS IN
PREHISTORIC AND EARLY HISTORICAL TIMES

BY
ARNOLDS SPEKKE



"The Pursuit of Truth to Make Men Free"

SLAVIC INSTITUTE
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INSTITUTIONAL AND
SLAVE INSTITUTION
PAPERS

SOME THOUGHTS
ON THE
PAPERS OF THE
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THE INSTITUTIONAL AND SLAVE INSTITUTION

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SOME PROBLEMS OF BALTIC-SLAVIC RELATIONS IN PREHISTORIC AND EARLY HISTORICAL TIMES

WE HAVE to begin with a puzzle—the puzzle of linguistic and ethnic character which is very important for the interpretation of Baltic prehistory.

About the middle of the second century of our era, Ptolemy speaks of the *Sarmatikos Okeanos* and *Ouenedikos Kolpos* in his *Geographike Hyphegesis*, and those names appear on the maps which accompany his text. The maps are of such obscure origin that the scholarly disputes continue on this matter. What is meant, cartographically, by the Venedikos Kolpos (Bay of the Venedi, the Wendish Gulf)? No gulf appears on the map itself except by name, but as this name is located below the name of the ocean, and since for Ptolemy the Scandinavian peninsula did not exist, it could mean the Baltic Sea, or some part of it around the later Danzig.

The most important difficulty arises from the ethnical denomination: Venedi (Pliny), or Venethi (Tacitus), resp. Venedikos. Until very recent years, scholars seemed to have no trouble at all with this problem. So, for instance, for the two most often read and quoted authorities in Slavistics in this country, G. Vernadsky and Fr. Dvornik, those classical denominations, Venedi-Venethi, “were undoubtedly Slavs.” (G. Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia*, 4th ed., 1952, p. 102. Cf. Dvornik, *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe*, 1949, p. 14).

Today this conception appears to be less clear, in fact very

2 Marquette University Slavic Institute Papers

doubtful indeed. The opposition comes from the linguistic side. To mention only two well-known names, H. Krahe and W. Entwistle, especially Krahe, who, in his studies of the old Illyrian language, suggests an Illyrian element in his interpretation of the mysterious Venedi. In one of his recent lectures he himself voiced certain doubts regarding his Illyrian theory, nevertheless he does not return to the older Slavic interpretation, leaving the solution to further study.*

Upon these linguistic researches may depend some new aspects concerning the prehistory of the Balts, or Proto-Balts, such as their prehistoric sites, their neighbors, etc. One thing at least seems to be clear, which is the fact that the existence of Baltic tribal names in the text and map of Ptolemy is recognized even by those scholars who never have been very objective toward the Balts. The names are logically connected with the ancient amber trade. Even the varying interpretations of Tacitus' *Aestii* cannot conceal the connection of the old Baltic tribes with this trade of greatest importance in ancient times.**

This short introduction has served as an approach to the most beclouded and disputed period of the Baltic-Slavic secular relations, i.e., roughly the second half of the first millennium after Christ. No direct historical text exists; and the archeological research which has only begun is unfortunately biased today by intolerant dogmatic views. Linguistic data are revealing, it is true, but their chronologies are static and vague. Even with all these discouraging premises we still need to know, or at least to surmise, what happened on this "floating" Baltic-Slavic frontier, since it is the basis of later developments. During those dark ages were laid, not fixed naturally, the basis of

* Hans Krahe, *Vorgeschichtliche Sprachbeziehungen von den baltischen Ostseelaendern bis zu den Gebieten um den Nordteil der Adria*. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abh.d. Geistes und Soz. wiss. Klasse. Jahrgang 1957, Nr. 3. Wiesbaden, 1957.

** In the recent book of P. Bosch-Gimpera, *Les Indoeuropéens. Problèmes Archéologiques*, Paris 1961, the Veneti problem is becoming even more complicated. Cf. p. 257 sq.

those historical frontiers which we know from the great chronicles of the beginning of the second millennium A.D.

For the first time I tried to formulate some of those problems in an article, *La cosiddetta preistoria baltica*, printed in *Antemurale* of the *Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae*, Nr. I, 1954, published by the Pontificia Università Gregoriana of Rome.



The Balts and the Eastern Slavs, especially the large tribe of the *Krivichi*,* from whom the Latvians derived the name *Krievs* (plur. *Krievi*), by which they call all Russians, have lived as neighbors for at least one and a half millennium, from the time of Gothic and Byzantine writers in the 6th century, who recorded large and dramatic Slavic movements from east to west in central and southern Europe. If we consider only the investigations which started at the end of the nineteenth century, we must conclude that this westward movement of the prehistoric Baltic tribes was caused by increasing pressure from the Eastern Slavic and Polish side. The geographical reason for this pressure was generally the struggle for control of the waterways—the Pripet, the Beresina and the upper Dvina (Latv. *Daugava*)—for the purpose of colonization and trade. Some remote references can be found regarding this struggle. One example occurred at the end of the tenth century with the contest between Prince Vladimir of Kiev and the Yatvingians, who included also in their dispute the Narev-Bug, the Vistula, and the Nemunas river routes. One of the principal advocates of this theory is M. Vasmer, who propounded his views for the last time, as far as I know, in a speech at the *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur* in Mainz, in 1957. Widely known

* One part of the Byelorussians of today occupy old Krivichan lands. The ethnic and linguistic problems of the origin of those Byelorussians are very complicated, and different theories have been created, as from the Baltic, so also from the Slavistic point of view, to explain their origin. Cf. the respective article published in the Russian book quoted in our section VII (pp. 523 sq.).

4 Marquette University Slavic Institute Papers

are his respective formulas such as the following: "During the first centuries of the Christian era a chain of Baltic tribes dominated the regions from about Wilna to those of Kaluga and Moscow." (*Geistige Arbeit*, February 5, 1938).

In their attempt to claim maximum expansion for the age-old stand of the Eastern Slavic tribes, the Soviet prehistorians are, or were, at least, in sharp opposition to the views of western scholars. It is not easy to follow the zigzag of the communist party line, even in matters such as this, but we can acquire some insight by observing how P. N. Tretyakov deals with those problems in the first edition of his book, *Vostochnoslavyanskiye Plemena* (1948). In this book he expresses great admiration for the extravagant theories of N. J. Marr (regarding Marr, see the lucid explanations of Prof. R. Smal-Stocki in *The Nationality Problem of the Soviet Union* [1952, Chap. IV, VIII]), and in the second edition (1953), his deep repentance of this erroneous admiration. (cf. e.g., pp. 107, 130, 229, etc.)



Now, perhaps it would be of interest to hear what a Balt has to say about it. Already the famous Lithuanian linguist, K. Buga, has created chronological and geographical visions about the respective supposed developments, but the archeologists have not been able to reach definitive results because the places concerned are under communist occupation, and their party line respects only its own statements. To illustrate this assertion, we can see how the newest Soviet encyclopaedia deals with the problem in connection with the excavation at Gnezdovo, near Smolensk, which is so important for establishing early Baltic positions.*

After careful study of the research already done, particularly by linguists during the twentieth century, and especially after World War II, a Baltic observer is able to arrive

* cf. e.g. G. Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia*, 4th ed. 1952, pp. 230-232, etc.

at some general conclusions concerning Baltic-Slavic relations during the second half of the first millennium and the very beginning of the second.

I. In spite of the protests of Soviet prehistorians, there must have been a general retreat of the Balts on a vast scale as a result of Eastern Slavic and Polish pressure. It is generally accepted that this retreat began in the sixth century.

The first great chroniclers of the second millennium (Gallus, Nestor, Adam of Bremen, Hypatian, and others) found the eastern and western Balts already located in their places of refuge, that is, in geographically defensible positions. The Old Prussians behind their marshes, the Lithuanians "in their woods" (Litva v liesech, Hypatian), the Latvians behind the marshy riverbeds of the Lovat and later the Velikaya and the Yatvingians making their final desperate and heroic stand against combined Eastern Slavic and Polish forces (Hypatian, Dlugosz), after which "they ceased to exist" (prestasha biti, Hypatian). This matter, curiously, did not end with the highly dramatic rhetoric of Hypatian and Dlugosz, nor with the gloomy words of old Shafarik (Slawische Altertuermer, Leipzig, 1843-44, Vol. I, p. 347-50) that "only the great burial mounds here and there by the side of a river, or in a forest, remain to remind us of their bloody battles." While investigating the Baltic-Slavic ethnic frontiers in the nineteenth century, a Latvian historian, K. Stalsans,* discovered an article in the Publications of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society, *Obshchestva*, of the year 1861, evaluating some recent statistics of the czarist government of Grodno, where among other ethnic statements, it was found that 30,927 persons had declared themselves to be Yatvingian. In 1861!

In his book, published in 1958, Stalsans says "It is characteristic that they were not found in one province only, but in

* *Latviesu un lietuviesu austrumu apgabalu likteni* (The destinies of the Latvian and Lithuanian eastern regions) Chicago, 1958.

four, which were the territories of the once extensive Yatvingian lands. The report does not specify a mother tongue, although it is hardly likely that in the middle of the 19th century it could still have been the Yatvingian language, but we cannot know whether or not it might have survived in a crippled form amongst the older generation. Even so, if at the time of the report the Yatvingian language no longer existed, still there were people who knew their ancestors to have been Yatvingians, otherwise they would not have termed themselves as such to the commission." The Yatvingian mystery awaits its master. The last unique monograph about them was written in 1859 by A. Sjögren in the *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*. For a more recent reference to the Yatvingian question see M. Czapkiewicz, Fr. Kmietowicz, *Skarb Monet Arabskich z okolic Drohiczyna nad Bugem*. Polska Akademia Nauk, 1961. (Also Cf. section VII.)

II. The constataions I have given regarding early geographical positions correspond to a certain extent with the facts of the ancient amber trade from the Baltic coast to northern Italy (Aquileia) and as far as the shores of the Black Sea. It has been established that the peak of this commerce was during the first two centuries of our era, the last historical evidence having been the journey of a special delegation of Old Prussians to the court of the Gothic King, Theodoric, in Ravenna (beginning of 6th century). This trade was later cut off by the Slavic expansion, and only rare indications of it remain. (Cf. the recent edition of the Polish Academy A. Czapkiewicz a.p., *Skarb Dirhemow Arabskich z Czechowa*, 1957 [near Lublin.])

Even the old denomination for amber, "sucinum," has disappeared, having been replaced in many languages with the Arabic "anbar," meaning ambergris. Only the Balts and their eastern neighbors retain the old root *gint-*: Lith. *gintaras*, Latv. *dzintars*, and Russ. *yantarj* (but the Russian word is a loan word from Lithuanian). The Polish *bursztyn* is related to the German

tradition (Bornstein-Bernstein), but curiously, the Hungarian *gyantár* with the eastern.

III. It is difficult, in fact not even possible as yet, to trace precise lines on the map to show the Baltic retreat of successive centuries, i.e., from the hypothetical sixth or seventh up to the first centuries of the second millennium (Cf. the fine article of M. K. Ljubavski [in Byelorussian] *Litva i slaviane u ih uzay-emaadnosinah u XI-XIII staletsti*. Mensk, 1929. Possibly it was one of his last works, since he was liquidated as a scholar and teacher by the Soviet authorities.*) In the general historical Atlases one finds vague lines and white spots to indicate a Baltic-Slavic frontier—only vague lines and white spots to show the location of the unwritten Baltic drama. However, certain special Atlases already have been published, such as K. Jazdzewski's *Atlas to the Prehistory of the Slavs*, (Lodz, 1948). The very creation of similar works is significant, but the trouble remains that sometimes the hypothetical maps are more explicit than the texts on which they are based.

IV. The secular Baltic tragedy was of no interest for the historiographies of the great empires of the nineteenth century, except for the Lithuanian developments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but several decisive factors in our regions were overlooked, including the splitting up of the Proto-Baltic hybrid linguistic unity into individual dialects, which occurred about the 8th century A.D. This linguistic fact also had a political significance. Separate political unities were being formed here just as they were everywhere in eastern Europe at that time, resulting in the formation of the earliest known Baltic States. Abstract deductions are no longer necessary, because we have historical evidence of the Old Prussians and the Cures from the ninth century, similar facts about the Semgallians from the eleventh century, etc.

* *Rewriting Russian History. Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past*. C. E. Black, Editor. London 1957, pp. 6, 202, a.o.

8 Marquette University Slavic Institute Papers

It is curious how archaic are some of the present day Polish historians in their approach to the problems of the Old-Prussian political developments. Cf. Stanislaw Ketrzynski, *Polska X-XI wieku*. Warszawa 1961 (Wydano z zasilku Komitetu Obchodow Tysiaclecia Panstwa Polskiego), pp. 66, 271, 315-16, 157 a.o.

V. The documentation concerning Old Livonia, meaning that part of our territory north of the Duna-Daugava River, came late. This was one of the reasons why colonial German-Baltic historiographers considered as prehistory everything that happened before the twelfth century. The famous chronicle of Henricus de Lettis (beginning of the thirteenth century) already records "imperialistic" clashes from both sides—the Danes and Saxons from the west, and the ancestors of the present day Byelorussians from Polotsk, Pskow a.o. from the east. From the described events, the old historiographic schools deduced that without the Saxon invasion, the Balts would have been absorbed by the Eastern Slavs long before. This opinion overlooked the fact that the Balts had no helping hand from the Saxons during the many preceding centuries. On the contrary, they were being attacked from both sides, and the Vikings-Varangians proved to be the stronger force.

VI. In this connection I mention a serious German work by L. Kilian, which sums up several decades of investigations by the Koenigsberg Archeological School. The title of his book is *Haffkuestenkultur und Ursprung der Balten* (Bonn, 1955) (*Civilization of the Gulfs of Old Prussia and the Origin of the Baltic Peoples.*)

Author Kilian characterizes as Proto-Baltic, the neolithic civilization on the shores of the old Prussian gulfs, from Danzig to Memel. He arrives at this conclusion by building a bridge of argument from the archeological evidence to the linguistic. For him this civilization was a typical "Mischkultur," or heterogenous one, assuming the probability of more or less local move-

ments of the Proto-Baltic peoples, which might also be surmised from the words of Jordanes in the sixth century A.D.:

Jordanes, chap. 5: "But on the shores of the Ocean where the rapid waters of the river Vistula empty into three gorges, live the Vidvarians (Vidivarii), combined of different nations (tribes). Behind them the banks of the Ocean are held by the Aistians (Aisti), peoples of a very peaceful disposition.

Jordanes' location of the pre-Balts on the shores of the Baltic Sea does not contradict, in principle, with the hypothesis of their expansion to the east. If we assume prehistoric movements from east to west, we may also suppose movements from west to east, but those things are not at all clear yet! Moreover, during the period of time from the second millennium and during the entire first millennium before Christ, was an era of "great movements of peoples during the period of transition from the Ages of Bronze and Iron to the times of history proper," as the already quoted P. Bosch-Gimpera puts it. (*op. cit.* p. 292)

VII. Finally I want to mention a recent publication of the Academy of the USSR:

Voprosi etnicheskoy istoriyi narodov Pribaltiki po dannim archeologiyi, etnografiyi i antropologiyi, pod redaktsiyey S. A. Tarakanovoy i L. N. Terentyevoy. Moskva 1959.

It is the first volume of the announced series:

Trudi Pribaltiyskoy Obyedinennoy Kompleksnoy Ekspeditsiyi, pod obshchey redaktsiyey H. A. Moora, B. A. Ribakova, S. P. Tolstova i N. N. Cheboksarova.

This work, (*The Problems of the Ethnic History of the Baltic Peoples*) deserves our attention for several reasons, the most important being that this first volume seems to indicate a new trend in archeological research. The authors, especially those of Baltic stock, have quoted freely the once strictly forbidden research works of the bourgeois element. If this trend can continue, the scholarly tradition existing previous to World War II, might in some way be restored. For historians, how-

10 Marquette University Slavic Institute Papers

ever, such freedom is still impossible. (cf. my review of the *Istoriya Latvyskoi SSR* in *Journal of Central and Eastern Europe*, 1962-1).

Another encouraging aspect is the systematic accumulation of archeological evidence from the almost unexplored zone to the east of the Latvian and Lithuanian national frontiers. We hope this evidence will help to create a clearer picture of the prehistoric happenings in an area where there has been so much nationalistic misunderstanding, distrust, ill will, or simple ignorance. There are, moreover, some pages with a new and interesting approach to the Yatvingian question, (p. 540-41).

In at least two places the book indicates that finally the problem of Slavic secular penetration into Baltic prehistoric territories, and the toponymic method (without indicating the promoters, however) are being recognized even in Soviet studies. Perhaps scholars like M. Vasmer, V. Kiparsky,* and others, may find themselves being quoted one day by archeologists from the other side of the Iron Curtain.



Now we arrive at the beginning of modern history—the crucial sixteenth century—crucial as well for the frontier land that has always been, and will continue to be, our Livonia, or the Baltic States.

In the 1470's "the Great Lord Novgorod" (Gospodin Velikiy Novgorod) fell under the rule of the Moscovites. The historical account of this event was recorded, then as now, in true Moscow fashion in chronicles that can be read today. The free and affluent bourgeois of the great commercial and cultural center of Novgorod was annihilated and, as a German chronicle reports, "schoede Voelker" (barbarians) were imported to replace them.

Livonia's turn was to come next—at the very beginning of

* His linguistic maps are shown also in my *History of Latvia*, 2d ed., 1957, p. 29.

the sixteenth century. In 1502, at Smolina, near Pakov, was written the last page of the German Order under Walter von Plettenberg. It may be noted here, that together with the German knights, was a Latvian unit of Curish freemen, who, in defense of their homes, displayed the banner of the so-called Courland Kings.

Since these are well known historical events, it is quite enlightening in this century of "the big lie" to compare the Baltic experiences with the Moscovites of recent decades with the existing evidence of similar official lies of those days, showing that the methods of the Moscovites, whether Russian or Bolshevik, are forever fateful for the Balts.

Several chronicles contemporary with those times are to be found at the Library of Congress. I would like to quote excerpts from three of them. One is a text written about 1561-1562 by the German chronicler Johannes Renner; another is the English text of the testimony of an anonymous Pole, found in the Richard Hakluyt collection I, 1576, but the most revealing of all is in the chronicle of Franz Nyenstaedt (1540-1622), an influential man in Riga during the Livonian war and later.

In 1554 the period of provisional peace had run out between the ruling Order in Livonia and Moscow's Grand Duke Ivan IV, who already had earned for himself the sinister epithet "the Terrible." Ivan had decided to return to the western expansion policy of his grandfather, proceeding with conscience in regard to the historical veracity of what he preferred to call "legal and just claims" against the completely unprepared Livonian rulers, who had filled the days of the provisional peace with personal quarrels and a definite tendency toward excessive indulgence.

Nyenstaedt's report of the visit of the Livonian envoys to Moscow in the year 1554 is so instructive that I shall quote him at some length:

12 Marquette University Slavic Institute Papers

When the time came to renew the treaty to secure and prolong the peace, the Grand Duke had letters laid before the Livonian envoys to Moscow—not only the one signed by the Grand Master von Plettenberg in 1502, but also earlier sworn letters of those others who had agreed to pay the tribute, to the best of their knowledge and belief, thereby proving that in the past the tribute had been duly paid. But now, when he sees that the Livonians no longer wish to recognize their obligation, the Grand Duke may not be willing to prolong the peace unless the envoys recognize their sworn letters and agree to pay in full the long overdue tribute.

The envoys were so taken by surprise they could not answer, but finally said they did not know what kind of tribute could be meant, nor could they find any information in their ancient records indicating that the Grand Master had agreed to pay such a tribute. They asked whether this matter could not be disregarded now, and the treaty to prolong the peace be signed. The Grand Duke became very angry, saying that he was amazed they did not seem to remember that many centuries before, their forefathers had come from across the sea to invade the land of his ancestor. He reminded them that in order to spare much blood from being shed in defending his land from the invaders, his ancestor had allowed the Livonians to remain, providing they pay a legal tribute. Now that promise to pay is no longer being honored, therefore they will have to pay the tribute also for all past times when it has been disregarded, otherwise he will be forced, against his nature, to take stern measures toward the Livonians. . . . Now the Grand Duke became enraged, saying he should have known they had no intention of respecting the legal seals of their agreement. Since it was plain they had made no effort to remember their debt in the past hundred years or more, they seem not to care whether their children will inherit the cherished peace. They pretend not to know, but it is more likely they do not want to know. Therefore let them be informed now, that the tribute from each person in Livonia, is one Moscow mark, or ten dennige per annum.



Although Renner was a private observer, he noted the real hue when he wrote:

. . . because the Grand Duke (was so very much annoyed over Livonia and) threatened to overrun it (Livonia) with his troops, the envoys agreed to pay the claimed annual tribute . . .

On another page Renner remarks that "Ivan was looking for an opportunity to begin an assault against Livonia".

This claim of tribute came as lightning out of the sky to the Livonians, or as Nyenstaedt wrote: "the bottom of the barrel fell out for them," since no one had any information whatever about this so-called "just claim." Even the precise Nyenstaedt, who evidently was writing from official minutes, apologizes to his readers, saying: "Now I do not know, in effect, if the tribute was meant for all of Livonia or part of it, but I will find out and then settle it accordingly."

The text by the anonymous Pole expresses his indignation about the Muscovite's threat against Livonia, and adds further information in these words:

. . . to cloke his tyranny and ambition under some faire pretense, amongst other of his demands, made mention also of a tribute due unto him out of the Bishop of Dorpat's jurisdiction, but there is no man living who can tell of his own remembrance, or from the relation of others, that any such tribute was ever paid to the Muscovite. He commanded the Grand Master of the Livonian Order to get what knowledge he could from the man of Dorpat, and urged the tribute, saying if it were worth but one haire, he would not remit it. At length it was found recorded in the ancient chronicles of Dorpat, that beyond the memory of man, when the territory of Plesko contained nothing but woods and forests for wilde beasts, the peasants of the Liberty of Dorpat, called Neuhus, by the consent of the Muscovite Lords, had enjoyed beehives in the said woods, and paid every year in lieu thereof, unto the Russian governors, six shillings of Livonian coin. But so soon as the Russians had felled the woods and built towns and villages in their place, the said pension ceased. Therefore the said six shillings were never since that time either demanded by the Russes or paid by the Livonians.

14 Marquette University Slavic Institute Papers

What is most surprising, even amusing, in the Nyenstaedt narrative is Ivan's fictitious tale with regard to the arrival of the first Livonians on what he declared to be Muscovite soil. Czarist or communist, the party line is never concerned with the facts, but only with the maximam ad gloriam of the Muscovite-Russian expansion.

In our own century, the Baltic nations fought against great odds to win their freedom from Russia, and in 1920, peace treaties were signed whereby the Communist government of Moscow recognized the sovereignty of the new Republics, renouncing "forever" any claim to their territories. But only one short generation later, in 1940, without the slightest basis for suspicion, the Baltic nations once more were suffering vilification and accusations of wholly imaginary crimes against the Soviet Union as a prelude to still another Russian grab for the Baltic lands. The full text of the Soviet ultimatum of June 16, 1940, to the Latvian government, can be found in Bilmanis' *Latvian-Russian Relations*, pp. 202-03. The most absurd charge included in this document was against the issuance of an innocuous magazine called *The Baltic Review*, being published also in English, French, and German. I, myself, am one of the "criminals" who contributed to that "evil" publication which the Soviets claimed was a menace to their security. You may be amused to know that my offering was a short article about an old Anglo-Saxon map of the tenth century A.D.

The closing sentence of the Soviet ultimatum states that unless Latvia complied with the stated demands "it is impossible to achieve the honest and loyal execution of the Latvian-Soviet pact of mutual assistance." Honest and loyal!! To what depths of immorality can twentieth century Soviet diplomacy descend in "cloaking tyranny and ambition"?

With these words I have opened the large volume containing the story of unceasing acts of Russian violence against the Baltic peoples, including the chapter which tells of the com-

mand visits of the Foreign Ministers of the Baltic Republics to Moscow in 1939; the Kremlin demand for consent to establish Soviet military bases within their countries to protect them against "other powers," and the solemn promise that this mutual security pact would under no circumstances impair the sovereign rights of their nations. The false charges that they were not living up to the terms of the pact, followed by ultimatums demanding the formation of a new government more "friendly" to Moscow, and consent to the entry of unlimited Red armed forces. Either accept the terms within six hours or suffer an immediate forced occupation which would crush any resistance. Then came the Bolshevik fury of vengeance against those Balts who had shown themselves to be unwilling to bow to "the sun rising in the East" (Vishinsky's rhetoric), followed by the death or deportation of many thousands of innocent people.

When the Duchy of Courland went down, together with free Poland, during the Third Partition of that country, the ruling gentry of Courland was reported to have expressed "general and individual happiness that the knowledge of being subjugated to the will of a great power gives." How much this sounds like the Latvian communist papers of today.

So it is that history repeats the awful oriental symphony of violence, without pity and without end, while today they carry on their monotonous recitation of rhetorical slogans adopted from the radical writings of western social and political dreamers.

It may not seem strange that the Muscovites have always tried to overrun their neighbors in attempts to expand their borders. What is strange is the fact that in more than 1,000 years they have been unable to impose a lasting rule over these peoples they have tried so many times to subjugate. Time after time they have had to begin anew. We find the same theme running through historical texts that began in the eleventh century with the chronicle reputed to have been written by Nestor.

It was Nestor who did not hesitate to impose his "idealistic" tributes upon peoples about whom he apparently knew no more than the name by which they called themselves, as in the case of the sturdy seagoing Cures, and writings of "Yaroslav the Wise" who thought it wise to place the name of a Russian saint (St. George) on the old Estonian fortress Tartu (German, Dorpat).

Our Baltic case is not an isolated one in old Europe. When we study the histories of the Irish, the Welsh, the Albanians, or the Finns, we come to realize that each of the so-called great powers is great for only a relatively short period of time in history when they find they can maintain only a physical control over their captive nations. The small nations know they can survive another foreign domination, and yet retain their own national entity.

The problems of modern historiographies cannot be solved here, so let us conclude with the words of an old Welshman to the invading, victorious English King, Henry II, as quoted by Gyraldus Cambrensis, a contemporary of Latvia's Henricus. (*Description of Wales*, Vol. II, Chap. X):

This nation, Oh King, may now, as in former times, be harassed and in great measure weakened and destroyed by your and other powers, but it can never be totally subdued through the wrath of man, unless the wrath of God shall concur. Nor do I think that any other nation than this of Wales shall, in the day of severe examination before the Supreme Judge, answer for this corner of the earth.

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